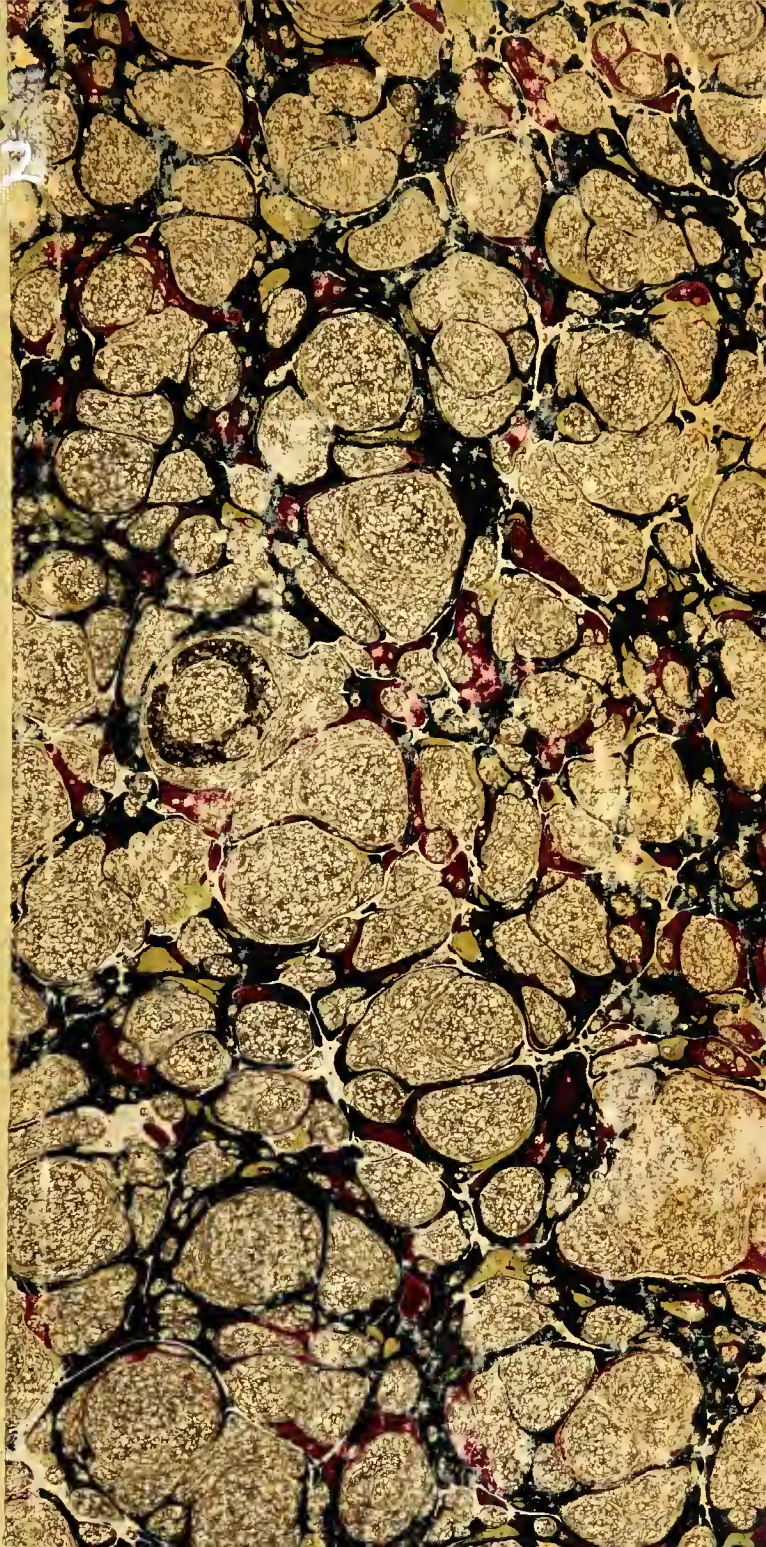


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The Claims of Literary Culture

AN ADDRESS

INTRODUCTORY TO THE PRELIMINARY COURSE

IN

THE HAHNEMANN MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF PHILADELPHIA

delivered September Twenty-seventh, 1875

P. 2703

BY

HIRAM CORSON, M. A.

Professor of Anglo-Saxon and English Literature in The Cornell University

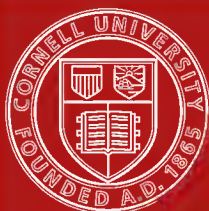
si ex his studiis delectatio sola peteretur, tamen, ut opinor, hanc animadversionem humanissimam ac liberalissimam judicaretis. Nam ceterae neque temporum sunt neque aetatum omnium neque locorum; at haec studia adolescentiam agunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium ac solatium praebent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.

—Cicero, *Orat. pro A. Licinio Archia.*

PHILADELPHIA

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MDCCCLXXV



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AT a meeting of the Students of the Hahnemann Medical College, held September 27th, 1875, the following resolution was adopted :

RESOLVED, That a Committee of six members of the class be appointed to convey to Professor Corson our hearty thanks for his very able and interesting Address delivered on Monday, September 27th, 1875, at the opening of the Preliminary Course of the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia, and to request a copy for publication.

The following Committee was appointed :

A. E. MARTIN, of Massachusetts, A. P. WILLIAMSON, of Pennsylvania,

A. S. NICHOLS, of Minnesota, F. A. BISHOP, of New York,

D. P. NAGUEIRA, of Brazil, WM. A. GLOVER, of New Jersey.

SAMUEL EDEN, *Secretary*.

GEO. W. SMITH, *President*.

PHILADELPHIA, Oct. 2d, 1875.

PROF. HIRAM CORSON,

Dear Sir:—I take pleasure in transmitting to you a Record of the proceedings of a meeting of students of the Hahnemann Medical College of this city.

I need not state that the Committee hope the request embraced in the enclosed resolution may meet with your favorable consideration.

Your obedient servant,

ALDEN E. MARTIN,

Chairman.

THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY,

ITHACA, N. Y., 9 Oct., 1875.

ALDEN E. MARTIN, Esq.,

Dear Sir:—Your favor of the 2d, transmitting to me a Record of the proceedings of a meeting of students of the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia, held on the 27th ult. (George W. Smith, Chairman, Samuel Eden, Secretary), was duly received; but a great press of business has prevented me from replying thereto until the present. It will afford me much pleasure to comply with the request embodied in the Resolution passed on the occasion; and as you concede to me the supervision of the printing of the Address, I shall carefully revise it, and place it in the hands of our University printer at the earliest date at which I can get it ready.

I am, most respectfully, etc.,

Your obedient servant,

HIRAM CORSON.



Gentlemen :

When I accepted the invitation extended to me through Dr. Henry Noah Martin, to deliver the Introductory Lecture to your Preliminary Course, it was with the understanding that it should be on a subject within my own line of study, and not directly appertaining to medical studies. If the latter had been required, I should have been obliged respectfully to decline, as I don't know anything about medicine further than that I used to take a large assortment of drugs, and gradually discovered that the less I took the better it was for me.

The subject announced in the Programme, is, "The Claims of Literary Culture upon the Medical Profession." This perhaps indicates to my audience something a little more special in its character than I contemplated. I mean to address myself more particularly to young students who may feel the necessity of

supplying somewhat the deficiencies of their literary education, (which deficiencies are quite common, even with college graduates, in these days, when Science has usurped the place formerly occupied by the humanities,) and to present some of the claims which the study of our great English Literature possesses as an element of culture. And by culture I would not be understood to mean what is too generally meant in these days of knowledge-mongery, by the term education—but by culture I would be understood to mean all that is meant by the Latin word *humanitas*, and a great deal more—sensibility, susceptibility, impressibility, a cultivated instinctive sense of beauty and deformity—a sense of the spiritual relations of nature to the human soul, and of art, under its various forms, as an idealized manifestation and expression of all these relations.

Notwithstanding the arrogant claims of Science and its apotheosis of Reason, as the Alpha and the Omega, Humanity will assert its *wholeness*, as it has repeatedly done in the Past, after an undue suppression of any of its elements;—will “render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s;” and our future systems of education, through all their degrees, from the earliest home education up to and through the University course, if they are loyal to the highest interests of Humanity, must fully recognize and act upon the all-important truth in regard to our common nature, that it has a positive and a negative,

or an active and a passive side. To the one belongs that order of intellectual power which we call talent—to the other that order of intellectual power which we call genius. Through the one, the soul holds on to itself, so to speak,—maintains its personality,—tests and gives definiteness and practicableness to, its knowledge; through the other, it is fed with impressions from the outer world of Nature, which a great English poet has called, “the vicar of the Almighty Lord,” and is, to a greater or less degree, linked and brought into sympathetic relationship with the all-pervading soul of things, and rendered receptive of the spiritual, and it *divines* before it knows intellectually.

This side of our nature admits of a high culture along with the positive side, though the obstacles to this culture are many and great in the present constitution of society and of our systems of education, which tend to sharpen the intellect at the expense of the sensibilities.

Education should be, and, I am persuaded, *will* be, ere long, conducted with due regard to both the active and the passive nature—conducted as well genius-ward as talent-ward. We cannot make a genius by education; but every man can be cultured, more or less, in the direction of genius.

A merely positive nature, were such realizable, could never have glimpses even, of the higher truths which lie within the potentialities of the spirit of man; a merely negative nature would sink into a death-in-life

listlessness. The highest form of life is that in which a just equilibrium is preserved between the positive and the negative, or the active and the passive. An excessive exercise of the analytic faculty, induced by an exclusively scientific study, is unfavorable to this impressibility, this receptivity, this absorbent passivity, call it what you will, by and through which "great thoughts, great feelings, come, like instincts, unawares," and which has some alliance with that kingdom of God and his righteousness we are told first to seek and to which, when found, all things else will be added. In other words, let the mind and the sensibilities and the sympathies take the right *attitude* toward universal truth, and many of the great problems which men vainly endeavor to solve with the analytic, discursive faculty alone, become plain. Unfortunately for the intuition of this age, its materialism and its positivism have induced "a condition of humanity which has thrown itself wholly on its intellect, and its genius in physics, and has done marvels in material science and invention but at the expense of the interior divinity." The awakening of the interior divinity, of the spiritual instincts and intuitions, will, I trust, be as much the aim of the Education of the Future, as the exercise of the mere intellect now is. It will certainly be a leading aim in the medical education of the Future; for I am persuaded that the practice of the healing art must become more and more spiritual—must recognize more and more the spiritual forces resident in all matter, and ap-

ply them to the rectification of the deranged spiritual forces in the human organization; in short, the true physician must attain, in some measure, unto those gifts of healing spoken of in a certain old book which, I trust, none of you young gentlemen will neglect to read as a work not falling within your present line of study. It does.

The sensuous modes of reasoning so common to our period, must yield somewhat to that intuition which, while unconscious of its own processes, is, at bottom, subtly and profoundly logical.

The opinion widely prevails at the present day, when the analytic, discursive, generalizing intellect rules supreme, that the more impressible, susceptible, receptive, intuitive, a man is, the less character he must necessarily have;—in other words, the less of an individual, of a free agent, he is—the less firmly he stands on his own legs.

Now, paradoxical as it may appear, there can be no intense individuality that is not subject, in a more than ordinary degree, to the accidents of time and place. An individual in the fullest sense of the word, one who legitimates, as it were, in the eyes of his country or his age, his decisive influence over its destiny, is generally characterized, not so much by his rejecting power, though he may have this in a high degree, as by his appropriating power. He brings to the special unity of his nature, all that that nature, in its healthiest activity, can assimilate, and throws off only the non-assimilable

dross of things. The more complete his life becomes, the more it is bound up with what surrounds it, and he is susceptible of impressions the more numerous and the more profound.

The greater impressibility, and its resultant, the keener, more penetrating insight, which preëminently distinguish poetic genius from ordinary natures, render great poets the truest historians of their times, and the truest prophets. If we would acquaint ourselves merely with court manœuvres and follies, and the military exploits of any particular period of the Past, we must consult the ordinary Historian. If we would know something of the life of man, of any particular period, we must read the great Poets and Dramatists, if any there are, of that period. The poetic and dramatic literature of a people is a mirror in which is most clearly reflected their real and essential life. Geoffrey Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales* and in the Prologue thereto, gives us a better idea of what sort of people lived in England, in the 14th Century, than do all the histories of that period that have been written. And he does this without in the least transgressing the legitimate limits of his art, and because he does not transgress them. With a poet's impressibility, and a poet's eye for the characteristic, the picturesque, and the essential, he delineated, for all time, the features of the society around him; and to his poetry and that of his contemporary or immediate predecessor, Robert Langland, or whoever wrote the *Vision of William*

concerning *Piers the Plowman*, we are indebted for whatever sympathy we may have with the life that was lived by Englishmen and English women in the great historic age of Edward the Third. That 'sondry folk,' 'wel nyne and twenty in a companye,' 'by aventure i-falle in felawschipe,' at the 'hostelrie' of the Tabard, in Southwark, where they put up for the night, and who afterwards, under the leadership of Harry Bailey, their jovial host, rode together on their pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket, and chatted, and joked, and told stories, to beguile the tedium of the journey, we know far more intimately and sympathetically than we know or can know the great personages of the time that fill the largest space on the page of the historian.

Spenser, who, of all the great English poets, is regarded as the most remote from real life and as least reflecting his age, is nevertheless filled with the spirit of that age,—the magnificent age of Elizabeth,—but more especially with its chivalric, romantic, patriotic, moral, and religious spirit. When he began to write, the nation had just passed through the fiery furnace of a religious persecution, and was rejoicing in its recent deliverance from papistical rule. The devotion to the new queen, with which it was inspired, was grateful, generous, enthusiastic, and even romantic. This devotion Spenser's great poem everywhere reflects, and it has been justly pronounced to be "the best exponent of the subtleties of that Calvinism which was the aris-

ocratic form of Protestantism at that time in both France and England."

The dramas of Shakespeare mirror not only his own great age, but universal humanity in all ages. And so wonderful is the knowledge which they exhibit, of nature and of human life, and of the secret springs of individual being, that their authorship has been hotly disputed by this iconoclastic and analytic age. They who have most strongly questioned their authorship, have been unable to understand how a man who had not gone through, or been driven through, the curriculum of Oxford or Cambridge, who had received little or no scholastic training of any kind, could have written plays that have been the wonder and admiration of the world; and they have looked around for the real author that has been deprived of his just honors, and (a most significant fact!) have settled upon the greatest analytic mind of the age, Francis Bacon, the Father of Experimental Philosophy, as the author of dramas that must have been the product of the most synthetic of human minds,—of a mind that took in everything that was presented to it, organized and complete.

How, ask the Baconites, with a stolid analytic assurance, could such an uneducated man as Shakespeare was, have acquired the accurate and extensive legal knowledge exhibited in the plays? Whether Lord Bacon wrote them or not, they must have been written by one who, through a practical experience, was thoroughly conversant with the law. But how, I would ask,

did he acquire such an accurate knowledge of the phenomena of insanity, and, what is still more remarkable, of feigned insanity as exhibited, for instance, in Edgar, in the tragedy of *King Lear*? How was he able to delineate the kingly and princely character as he did, without long breathing the aura of royalty and nobility? And, not to notice the higher planes of knowledge and experience along which his mind moves with a graceful lightsomeness, how did he learn so much about flowers and all the popular sentiments attached to them? What is the secret of his minute acquaintance with hunting and hawking, and, what is more, the keen feeling he exhibits, in regard to these sports, whenever and wherever he has occasion to allude to them? How explain the wondrous knowledge exhibited in the plays, of both the animate and the inanimate worlds? Where shall we find in any work on bees, down to his day, at least, or in all poetry, down to the present day, a more minute knowledge of their economy? Such questions might be asked from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve, a summer's day. The Baconites' theory proves entirely too much, and consequently doesn't prove anything.

The secret of Shakespeare's knowledge and wisdom,—not learning, be it understood, for the learning, strictly speaking, and comparatively with the transcendent power of the plays, is a minimum,—the secret of his knowledge and wisdom lay, I feel assured, as it has lain with all great creative geniuses, in his all-comprehensive

impressibility,—in his *mediumship*; he was an all-receptive medium,—a medium through whom all the secrets and mysteries of nature and of human life passed, and, in passing, were, by an all-subtilizing intellect, brought under expressible conditions.

It is the essential spirit only of an age, as seized and exhibited by a great poet, that can retain a hold upon the interests and sympathies of future generations.

When we pass to the next great English poet, John Milton, we come upon another clear reflector of his age. He is, in fact, its great central figure, sustaining to it the most intimate and sympathetic relationship; and, of all that constituted its highest life, his works, both prose and poetical, are the best existing exponent. Of the principles involved in the great contest for civil and religious liberty carried on in his day, his prose works are the fullest embodiment. In the crowning work of his life, the *Paradise Lost*, it is easy to recognize the influence of his classical and Italian studies. We can see in it Homer, and Virgil, and Dante; but its essential, vitalizing, controlling spirit, is that of a refined and exalted Puritanism, freed from all that was in it of the contingent and the accidental; and thus that spirit will be preserved for ever in the pure amber of the poem, and men of all times will be able to respond to it to some extent. While, on the other hand, the *Hudibras* of Butler,—a man of mere talent rather than of genius,—the *Hudibras*, which aims at depicting in their literalness, all the coarser, more palpable and repulsive

features of Puritanism, will, in time, cease to have a living interest for men ;—its allusions will grow more and more obscure, and the clumsy wit which it contains, requiring more and more to have its secrets explained, will, in time, cease to be wit at all.

This hasty glance at four of the great princes in our literature may serve to indicate what a goodly heritage that literature is—the goodliest to which any Englishman or Anglo-American is born.

To know merely the thought—that element which is quite independent of form—to know merely the thought contained in a literature like the English, the great ideas of freedom, and beauty, and valor, and spiritual energy which it exhibits, is a great thing ;—to reach, by a careful culture of the sensibilities, an appreciation of its masterpieces, as works of art, is one of the greatest things, perhaps, which any one can aim after in his education. To grow up to one of Shakespeare's great dramas, is, of itself, an education ; and an education of the highest order, demanding, as it does, the fullest synthesis of thought and feeling of which ordinary natures are capable, in order to unify its manifold, and, to a sluggish sensibility, heterogeneous elements,—to see the one in the many, and to receive the one grand moral impression designed by the poet.

The merit of a work of high art, is to be estimated by the number and variety of the elements that have been moulded into an organic, harmonious whole, a

whole 'good and fair' and answering the artist's 'great idea.'

"What affects our hearts,
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts ;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well proportion'd dome,
(The world's just wonder, and e'en thine, O Rome!)
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes."

It is in taking in a great literary product as a *whole* that its chief *disciplinary* value consists—not in dealing *simply* with its separate elements. The study of Literature in its highest sense, is not that which it is made in many of our institutions of learning,—I might say in *most* of them—a study of literary history and biography and bibliography—the learning when an author was born and when he died, and the titles of the works he wrote and a few specimen bricks therefrom ; but it is a study of complete structures which are to be comprehended, not in their parts only, but in their *totality*. Herein consists the great value of literary study, if carried far enough, namely, the wide synthesis of thought and feeling which it serves to cultivate. For what is, or should be, the ultimate aim of all education, but the power to *synthetize*,—the power to hold many things together, either by thought or by feeling, or by both combined? It is by the *degree* of this power that every mind should be measured.

What are all the creations of the human imagination but the moulding of many elements into a new whole? Take any one of the great characters of Shakespeare, and it will be found that the poet, by the subtle and, to some extent, unsearchable, alchemy of his imagination, has worked into new forms, ordinary elements of humanity, and that the boldest of his creations serve but to exhibit the essential principles of our common nature. In the character of Richard III., he has moulded into a consistent individuality, "the hero, the lover, the statesman, the buffoon, the hypocrite, the hardened and repentant sinner." It is this triumph of dramatic power to which the great popularity of the detestable character of Richard is due, and which renders it, when adequately comprehended and sympathized with, a more valuable lesson in mental and moral philosophy, than is or can be afforded by any direct treatises on these subjects—more valuable, because it presents a living embodiment of psychological principles. We see them in the flesh, and in *action*—and this is a mode of teaching vastly superior to any abstract enunciation.

There is perhaps not one of Shakespeare's tragedies which, on a first reading, affords a very deep pleasure, so far as totality of impression is concerned. The material which the poet has locked up into unity, is, at first, too great for the synthetic power of the mind and feelings, which have gradually to be worked into a responsive attitude. "A masterpiece," says Lewes, in his *Life of Goethe*, "excites no sudden enthusiasm ;

it must be studied much and long, before it is fully comprehended ; we must grow up to it, for it will not descend to us. Its influence is less sudden, more lasting. Its emphasis grows with familiarity. We never become disenchanted ; we are more and more awestruck at its infinite wealth. We discover no trick, for there is none to discover. Homer, Shakespeare, Raphael, Beethoven, Mozart, never storm the judgment ; but, once fairly in possession, they retain it with increasing influence."

I said at the outset that I meant to address myself more particularly to young students ; and having briefly indicated what I regard as the ultimate aim and crowning result of literary study, I can glance only at some of the preparatory means to be employed to attain, as far as possible, to this result.

And first, I would call attention to the importance of developing and training all the latent powers of the voice for the fullest and most subtle æsthetic interpretative rendering of the masterpieces of our poetic and dramatic literature.

Without the ability to give a proper elocutionary expression to a literary art-product, the study of it, however otherwise minute and searching, must be more or less imperfect—almost as imperfect as would be the study of a musical composition without a vocal or an instrumental rendering. Every one who knows anything about poetry, is aware of the effects lurking in the mazes of the rhythm, in the vowel sounds,

in rhyme, assonance and alliteration, in unexpected pauses, in the acceleration and retardation of the verse, in the melodious distribution of emphasis, and in many other elements of poetic form. All these must be vocally realized before their power as elements of æsthetic expression can be duly felt.

It is hardly necessary to say that good readers are rare; but it is unfortunate that reading is so much regarded as a gift that takes care of itself. It does of course depend much on natural aptitude, as does success in any direction; but it also depends much on long, intelligent, and careful cultivation, and such cultivation is but seldom bestowed. When the reading voice receives the systematic training which is imparted to the singing voice in the great European Conservatorios of Music, then, and only then, can we look for better results than are reached by the present no-system of elocutionary education. The benefits that might be derived in the way of the highest literary culture and of the noblest literary entertainment, through an effective interpretative vocalization of our great authors, are, at present, little suspected. If, instead of learning *about* authors, we could, in this way, be brought face to face with their works, how infinitely superior would be the results, to the studying of compendiums and histories of literature! But for this to be done, we must first get out of the mere knowledge-mongery of our courses of so-called literary education.

There is one fact connected with the subject of read-

ing which has not, I think, received the attention it deserves: I allude to the influence of good reading on the art of composition. He who reads well, who exhibits in his reading the anatomy of the language, the logical relations of words, the relative value of clauses, and who presents, with distinctness of outline, and in proper perspective, the successive and involved groups of thought, will be more likely to write well, other things being equal, than the reader that makes a jumble of everything. Good reading, requiring, as it does, the most intimate knowledge of the mechanism of language, and involving, in its perfection, the whole art of rhetorical criticism, reacts upon our construction of language. Every one who has had any experience in writing, knows, or ought to know, how much the reading aloud of what he has written, contributes to the balancing and rounding off of his periods.

An all-important and indispensable preparation in early life for a sound literary culture, is the habit of a systematically careful and critical reading. (I don't mean, now, the vocalization of language, but reading through the eye.) Whoever reads at all, should be loyal to his author. He who devotes himself to one great literary masterpiece, who reads *out* of it all that it was meant directly to convey, and *into* it all that it suggests and awakens in the mind, reads to far better purpose, so far as mental discipline and real culture are concerned, than the omnivorous reader that gulps down everything in the shape of a book that happens to fall

in his way, or to be recommended to him as 'a good thing.' Reading, in these days of endless book-making, is made too much of a mere pastime, in which the mind takes no vigorous attitude toward the matter in hand, and the sensibilities are in a more or less torpid condition. Such is the general invertebrate character of that large class of readers of the present day that frequent circulating libraries, induced by an exclusive reading of the ephemeral productions of the press, that the great masters in the literature, and moulders of the language, that demand of their readers an energy of attention, are quite unknown to them, beyond the few commonplaces of criticism that float around. Their minds, whatever be their possible power, reach in time a chronic contraction on a scale commensurate with that of the small things upon which they are exercised.

A valuable means for cultivating a habit of close reading, in the absence of the discipline afforded by the study of Latin and Greek, (the general dropping of which, in our institutions of learning, were a thing to be much regretted,) is a thorough training in the logical analysis of the language of epic poetry, like that of the *Paradise Lost*, for example, which abounds in inversions and involutions of diction, that are carried often to the extreme limits of the capabilities of a logical syntax. For such a discipline, the English language has some advantages over even Latin and Greek, or any other highly inflected language, stripped as it is of inflections which in these languages often guide the stu-

dent mechanically, as it were, to the true meaning.* But peculiarly adapted as the present English is, to a discipline in logical analysis, as a medium for a grammatical discipline, which should precede the former, it is almost valueless, and it is gratifying to detect a growing suspicion in the educational world that the study of English grammar, as pursued in our preparatory schools, is not generally attended with the best results; that it is quite as often attended with bad results. It can be

* The following passage from the *Paradise Lost*, Book III. vv. 344—349, serves well to illustrate the difference between the parsing of an English and that of a Latin or Greek, sentence; I give it without points: “No sooner had the Almighty ceased but all The multitude of angels with a shout Loud as from numbers without number sweet As from blest voices uttering joy heaven rung With jubilee and loud hosannas filled The eternal regions.”

Harrison, in his ‘*Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language*,’ cites this passage as an example of the Anacoluthon, and remarks: “The noun *multitude* is not followed by any verb, to which it can be applied. Bentley proposes to read *gave a shout*, instead of *with a shout*. This alteration, it is true, would make the sentence conformable to the rules of grammar: but Milton, who so often constructs his sentences after the classical models, no doubt knew that he was supported by innumerable authorities in the use of this form of speech. If read with a pause after the word *joy*, the effect of the sentence is greatly increased, and we are ready to agree with Monboddo, when he says, ‘The lines are so wonderfully fine, that, if it were a real solecism, not to be justified by any ancient authority, I could excuse it.’ The poet, in fact, in the fervor of his imagination, seems carried up to the third heaven of inspiration, and there to stop and listen to the music of angels, and to the mellifluous rhythm of his own sweet numbers; he then collects himself, and gives this result of his impressions:—*Heaven rung*” etc.

But if we look at the passage aright, Harrison’s darling anacoluthon, over which he goes into such raptures, vanishes,—‘uttering joy’ not being connected, as it at first appears, with ‘blest voices,’ but with ‘multitude of angels,’ with which it is used absolutely. The difficulty consists in the absence of inflections that would guide the reader to the meaning intended, and he is obliged to turn from the letter to the thought. Now if this passage were translated into Latin, the construction would present no difficulty, as the forms alone of the words would indicate their relationship; ‘all the multitude of angels uttering joy’ would be put in the ablative absolute: ‘*omni angelorum multitudine jubilante.*’ “To parse an English sentence,” says George P. Marsh, “you must first understand it; to understand a Latin period, you must first parse it.”

asserted, almost without qualification, that those whose education is confined to what is afforded by the common schools, end their school-days with no available knowledge of the general principles of language, and, what is still worse, no correct knowledge whatever, of the structure of their mother tongue. The English child who studies no other language than its own, is at a peculiar disadvantage in the matter of grammar, in comparison, for example, with the German child. For the German language is still highly inflected, and all whose vernacular it is, can, through it alone, be exercised in grammatical relations. But the relations of words in an English sentence are for the most part logical, not grammatical, stripped as the language is of nearly all inflections,—their place being supplied by separate prepositive particles, and by auxiliaries; in other words, English is almost exclusively an analytic language, ideas and their relations in thought being separately expressed. English grammar was originally based on Latin grammar, and has been ever since treated, (except by a few German scholars, who have taken it in hand,) analogically—*per aliud*, instead of *per se*, as it should be. Dr. Wallis, whose *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae*, published as early as 1653, is still worthy to be ranked among the very best English grammars that have yet been written either by English or American grammarians, was the first to see the error of this analogical treatment of English grammar. Alluding to his predecessors, Gill, Ben Jonson, and others,

he remarks:—"They have all subjected this our English tongue too much to the rule of Latin, and delivered many useless precepts respecting the cases, genders, and declensions of nouns, the tenses, moods, and conjugations of verbs, the government of nouns and verbs, and other like things, which are altogether foreign to our tongue, and beget confusion and obscurity, rather than serve for explanation." *

If his successors had profited, as they should have done, by what he has so succinctly set forth in this passage, we should have had English grammar, long ere this, placed on its own bottom, and the fact would have been recognized and acted upon, that modern English is no proper medium for grammatical discipline; and, in the absence of the study of Latin and Greek, a resort would have been had to Anglo-Saxon, both as a means of exercising the young student in grammatical relations, and of tracing the origin of modern English phraseology.

The study of grammar, if properly pursued, *ought* to be one of the most interesting of all school studies, revealing, as it does, the workings of the ingenious and subtle organ the mind employs for the expression of its myriad impressions, thoughts, and sentiments. As generally pursued, it is the driest, most barren, and

* "Omnes ad Latinæ linguæ normam hanc nostram Anglicanam nimium exigentes multa inutilia præcepta de Nominum Casibus, Generibus, et Declinationibus, atque Verborum Temporibus, Modis et Conjugationibus, de Nominum item et Verborum Regimine, aliisque similibus tradiderunt quæ a lingua nostra sunt prorsus aliena, adeoque confusionem potius et obscuritatem pariunt, quam explicationi inserviunt."

most repulsive; as repulsive as what is called 'composition'—an exercise which is generally hated with a holy hatred by all young pupils upon whom it is imposed, as it too often is, before they have any ideas to compose.

For some years past, the curriculum of study in our schools and colleges has been verging more and more toward the natural sciences. The great strides that these have made within the memory of living men, and their important bearing upon every-day life and the progress of civilization and refinement, render it difficult to resist their tendency to displace many of the time-honored means of mental discipline. There is now a large class of educators in England and America, who look upon the study of Latin and Greek, for example, as a sad waste of time, when there is such an accumulation of useful knowledge in the world. This study, they argue, was all very well when there was little else to be learned; but that we should now sweep from our halls of learning the mediæval dust and cobwebs, and let in the wholesome and invigorating light of science. This sounds very plausible, even to those who regard education in its true character, as an out-drawing and a discipline of the mental faculties, irrespective of the special outward direction their exercise may take in after life; and to those who regard it as identical with the acquisition of useful knowledge—and they constitute a numerous class—as perfectly conclusive.

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Of one thing classical scholars are quite certain, that the study of Latin and Greek affords a certain kind of discipline such as no other study has yet been found to afford, and that, too, at an age when the mind is not prepared for much knowledge of any kind

The science of comparative philology, which is little more than half a century old, has already quite as great a claim upon educators as any of the more developed sciences, bearing, as it does, upon ethnology, and claiming the attention not of the scholar only, but also of the historian, the mental and the moral philosopher, and the theologian; and which, "though it professes to treat of words only, teaches us that there is more in words than is dreamt of in our philosophies."

For the study of this important science, there is no better preparation in early life than a thorough training in Latin and Greek, especially Greek; while the study of the development of the Greek verb affords of itself the best discipline to the young mind that has, perhaps, ever been devised. And then, as the foundation of a sound literary taste, the study of Latin and Greek may be said to be indispensable. Every Professor who has had any experience in conducting classes of young men in the critical reading of an English author, knows the great advantage enjoyed by those who have had a classical training over those who have not.

A promising sign in the study of Latin at the present time, is, the tendency to reduce to a minimum what is put into Latin Grammars, instead of slaughtering

the mind of the young student with a mass of anomalies, technicalities, and theoretical refinements. *Μέγα βιβλίον, μέγα κακόν*, a big book is a big evil, and that is especially true when the book is a Latin or a Greek grammar. President White, in a testimonial he wrote to Allen's Manual Latin Grammar, (a capital Introduction, by the way, to the language,) remarks: "I have been long convinced that the most dangerous foes of classical studies are not the men who decry them,—the Philistines,—but the men who smother them,—the Pedants. If classical scholarship shall ever be utterly neglected among us, it will be because those appointed to promote it, have substituted for the great works of the great minds of antiquity, endless gerund-grinding, and second-hand scraps of doubtful philosophy, and metaphysics of the subjunctive mood."

But if the old college curriculum must be departed from, the next best course to be pursued towards securing a similar, if not an equivalent, discipline, is to study our own language in its historical development. Any one who will take the trouble to examine all the more important and ambitious English grammars that have been written, must arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the English language *cannot* be studied, with any satisfactory results, on the basis of modern English. No man ever worked harder or more earnestly, 'to do up' English grammar, than Gould Brown. He spent a third of a century on his 'Grammar of English Grammars,' the 6th edition of which contains 1,102

pages 8vo., of closely printed matter, painstakingly sifted from 463 grammars and 85 other works. And with what result? A great cartload of a book which, so far as an adequate exposition of the construction of the English language is concerned, is not worth the shelf-room it occupies in a library. And the secret of the failure may be stated in a very few words: The author did the best, perhaps, condensation apart, that could be done, on the principle adopted, namely, of sifting nearly 500 grammars, all of which, with few exceptions, were based on the assumption that English grammar could be treated on the basis of the modern forms of the language. The modern English is, as I have already said, almost entirely stripped of inflection; but its syntax, and what is peculiar in its phraseology, have grown out of a highly inflected tongue, the Anglo-Saxon, which, more than eight hundred years ago, was brought in conflict with the language of a conquering people, with which it struggled for more than four hundred years, and came out of the struggle victorious, indeed, but shorn of all its inflectional trappings. Yet many of the residual forms of its phraseology were explainable and still are, only through the forms it had cast off before the struggle was ended. Take, for example, the familiar use of *the* before comparatives, as in the following sentence: "For neither if we eat, are we *the* better; neither if we eat not, are we *the* worse." How could the function of *the* before *better* and *worse* be explained to a class of young pupils knowing noth-

ing of Latin nor of any other inflected language? Its explanation would be attended with some difficulty. But a mere smattering of Latin on the part of the class would enable the teacher to make this use of *the* before comparatives perfectly plain, by showing its correspondence with *eo*, the ablative neuter of *is*, *ea*, *id*, in the same situation. But if the class were to begin with Anglo-Saxon grammar instead of modern English, a resort to Latin would be unnecessary; *the* would be at once recognized as the ablative *þȳ* or *þē* of the Anglo-Saxon demonstrative adjective pronoun, *se*, *seō*, *þæt*, (corresponding with the Latin *is*, *ea*, *id*), representing, in its old pronominal character, the two propositions, 'we eat,' and 'we eat not,' and as an ablative of cause or means, qualifying or limiting, adverbially, *better* and *worse*. "For neither if we eat, are we *the* (that is, on *that* account, namely, that we eat) better; neither if we eat not, are we *the* (that is, on *that* account, namely, that we eat not) worse."

But to explain the modern English verb to a class of young learners is attended with still greater difficulties—difficulties not real, but resulting from the attempt to study the language at the wrong end; and that part of the verb which is generally the least understood is the infinitive. What is the infinitive form of the verb? It is its name- or nominative- form, that form by which an act is designated. It is, in fact, an abstract noun, being the name given to an act conceived apart from an actor. Hence we find it used in all languages as a

noun, in the character of a subject of a proposition, and of a complement of a predicate. When we turn to the parent language, we find that our modern infinitive is derived from an oblique case of the old infinitive. The old infinitive ended invariably in -an, as *bindan*, *to bind*, *drifan*, *to drive*, *standan*, *to stand*, etc., and was used as a nominative and as an accusative. In addition to this, there was a dative form, preceded always by *tó-*, and ending in -anne, the final -e being a common dative ending, the final -n of the nominative form being doubled in accordance with the rule that a single final consonant, preceded by a single unaccented vowel, is doubled when a vowel follows in the inflection; so that the infinitive or abstract verb *bindan*, *to bind*, was declined, nom., *bindan*, dat., *tó-bindanne*, acc., *bindan*. This dative form of the infinitive, as the prefix *tó-* indicates, was employed after adjectives to express the *drift* of the feeling or quality which they designated, and after verbs to express their purpose. While the distinctive ending -en, of the early English infinitive, derived from the Anglo-Saxon -an, was fading out (in Chaucer's day, already, it had generally dwindled down to an obscure -e, which constituted a light syllable in his verse when followed by a consonant), this dative form was gradually taking its place, and the prefix *tó-* was as gradually losing its occupation as the exponent of a relation, and becoming the meaningless sign of the infinitive in the place of the old ending. This prefix *tó-* has become so inseparable from the infinitive, that

it is difficult for the mere English scholar to think of an infinitive apart from it; so much so, that in places where the pure infinitive is still used, as after the so-called auxiliaries *do, did, will, would, shall, should, may, might, can, could, must*, etc., of which it is the direct complement, and after a few verbs like *see, bid, dare, let*, etc., its true character is not always recognized. The same thing has happened with nouns and pronouns; dative and accusative forms have become *name-* or *nominative-* forms. For example, the modern English pronoun *you* was originally a dative and an accusative plural, Anglo-Saxon *eow*, the nominative being *ye*, Anglo-Saxon *ge*. The Quakers are often accused of speaking ungrammatically, in their use of *thee* as a nominative, "How does thee do?" But it is a case exactly similar to that of *you*; *thee* was in Saxon the dative and accusative singular of *þú, thou*. The only difference is, that the Quakers use as a nominative the singular of the old dative and accusative, instead of the plural, when addressing a single individual. General usage, however, has not sanctioned this.

But while the old dative of the infinitive has become the *name-* or *nominative-* form, it still retains its dative force in many situations; as in house *to let*, he is *to blame*; eager *to learn*, wonderful *to tell*; they went *to scoff* and remained *to pray*. When the modern English infinitive is used as a nominative or an accusative, the prefix *to* cannot be parsed as an element of speech, as it is a meaningless sign of the infinitive; but when

used as a dative, as in the above examples, and expressive of the *drift* of a feeling or quality, or the purpose of an act, the prefix has its old force. Now any attempt to explain our present infinitive to a class of beginners must, I am persuaded, result only in perplexity. And without a clear understanding of the infinitive, the analytic forms of the English verb cannot be understood; while to take those forms collectively, as is done by grammarians, gives the learner no idea of their structure. To learn that 'might have been loved' is the passive voice, potential mood, pluperfect tense, of the verb *love*, is of no use to the pupil as a grammatical exercise. In grammatical parsing, every word should be treated as a distinct part of speech, if we would have a clear understanding of the structure of language; but in the case of the English composite tenses, this would not be possible, except by studying them historically.

I cannot go further into this subject, but I maintain:

1st. That a thorough grammatical discipline in early life is the indispensable basis of a sound literary education.

2ndly. That the Latin and Greek languages are the best media through which that discipline can be secured.

3rdly. That the uninflected modern English, though peculiarly adapted as a discipline in logical analysis, is no proper medium for grammatical discipline, which should precede the former, and that in the absence of

the study of Latin and Greek, resort must be had to the parent language, the Anglo-Saxon, both as a means of exercising the young pupil in grammatical relations, and of tracing the origin of modern English construction and phraseology.

Connected with the discipline in grammatical and logical analysis, is that of tracing the history and noting the varied fortunes of words. Every careful reader of Shakespeare and of other authors for a century or more subsequent to his time, must be aware 'how slight and subtle, while yet most real, how easily, therefore, evading detection, unless constant vigilance is used,' the changes in meaning have been which great numbers of words, as much in use at this hour as they were then, have undergone. The value of the discipline that could be afforded by such a study, based on some of the best poetry and prose of the time, would be incalculable, in exercising the mind in the tracing of minute differences and fine distinctions. Poetry would be preferable as the basis of such a study, because, in all languages, "Poetry has dominion over the words of many generations."

And, apart from the *educative* value of such a study, it behooves all who read the English Bible to give some attention to the history of English words. Since 1611, when the Authorized Version was first published, many words employed in it have undergone changes and modifications in their meanings, which it is important that all should know who would read intelligently;

—much more important than that they should know the minute commentary that has gathered around the book like the sands of the desert around the Egyptian Sphinx. The Authorized Version was the ripe result of many previous efforts extending back to Wycliffe's translation, made toward the close of the 14th century. The King James's translators, as is stated on the title-pages of our Bibles, 'translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised' their work; and accordingly we see in it features of the language of the previous two hundred years. According to the rules laid down, the Bishops' Bible, projected by Archbishop Parker, and finished in 1568, was to be made the basis of the new version; but it follows Tyndale's more closely than any other.

Of the archaic words, phrases, and constructions, occurring in the Old and the New Testaments and the Apocrypha of the Authorized Version, and in the Book of Common Prayer, first published in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI., Eastwood and Wright, in 'The Bible Word-Book,' have noted no less than 1885, the *precise* meaning of at least one-half of which might not be recognized by the ordinary uncritical reader knowing nothing of the archaic elements of the language.

Often words continue to be intelligible in certain phrases, expressions, and juxtapositions, while their meanings may be overlooked in other connections, especially, if, in such connections, they make sense taken

in their present acceptation. For example, when the expression, 'the quick and the dead' is used, every one knows that 'quick' means 'living' or 'alive,' from its connection with the word 'dead.' But thousands might read what Hamlet says to Laertes at the grave of Ophelia, 'Be buried *quick* with her and so will I,' without thinking that the meaning is, 'Be buried *alive* with her and so will I.' Or they might mistake Lady Anne's meaning, in Richard III., when she says, with reference to Gloster, 'Either heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead, or earth gape open wide, and eat him *quick*.' There are passages in the Bible where the word could be taken in its present acceptation without violence to good sense. For example, Numbers xvi. 30: 'But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down *quick* into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.' When dear old mother earth takes a notion to open her mouth, men are apt to go down *quick* in the present sense of the word; but in this passage the word means *alive*. So in Psalm lv. 15: 'Let them go down *quick* into hell:' (or, 'the grave,' according to the marginal translation). Again, Psalm cxxiv. 2, 3: 'If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up *quick*, when their wrath was kindled against us:'

All students of early English know that the word 'thought' means, as often as it means anything else,

concern, anxiety, anxious care, despondency, hypochondria, and the verb 'think,' to give way to gloomy reflection and despondency, to be hypped, have the blues; for example, in Somers Tracts, vol. i. p. 172, we read, that "In five hundred years only two queens have died in childbirth. Queen Catharine Parr died rather of *thought*."* It is not at all likely that Catharine hurt herself much with thought, in the present sense of the word; but the poor woman had cause enough for a mortal anxiety and grief as the wife of Henry VIII. Hamlet's Soliloquy is very familiar to everybody, so familiar that we hardly know any more whether it is a good thing or a bad thing; but not all readers, perhaps, recognize the true force of the word 'thought,' in the passage, "And thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of *thought*." In Antony and Cleopatra, after the discomfiture of Antony, Cleopatra says to Enobarbus, 'What shall we do, Enobarbus?' To which he replies, 'Think, and die.' That is, Give way to grief and die. And yet how many good people read the 25th verse of the 6th chapter of Matthew, and understand it to mean that their food and drink and clothing must be matters of no consideration with them whatever! and feel extremely sorry that circumstances over which they have no control, prevent them from obeying the injunction to the letter—nay, more, oblige them to devote nine-tenths of their waking hours to getting their bread and butter.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples of this kind,

* Quoted from Trench's 'Select Glossary.'

to show the importance to the general reader of a knowledge of the archaic vocabulary of the language, if he would read with any degree of correctness.

But in the study of words, we must never forget that they can have for us their full power only when organized in thought. Take almost any passage at random from a great expresser like Shakespeare, and consider the individual words, and it will be found that the poet, while using those of ordinary speech, has so marshalled them as to inspire them with a new vitality.

The direction is often given by Professors of Rhetoric, to use Saxon words in preference to those of Latin origin. But such a rule, without qualifications, is a faulty one, though, in the main, it is correct. The Saxon element and the Latin element of our language have each their peculiar domain; and one is as important and as indispensable as the other, in a wide range of subject and expression. One set of ideas and sentiments may be more forcibly expressed in Saxon words, and another set of ideas and sentiments, in Latin words. It may be said, in general terms, that Saxon is the vocabulary of primitive ideas and feelings, and Latin the vocabulary of the discursive understanding. Saxon is more in the service of the heart, and Latin in that of the intellect. If the Queen, in Hamlet, in the interview with her son, called the slaying of the old chancellor Polonius, 'a sanguinary action,' instead of 'a bloody deed,' we should suspect the genuineness of her feeling in the matter, and that the expression came from

her head and not from her heart. A coldly intellectual theologian would be likely to say 'eternal felicity,' while another of warmer feelings would say, 'everlasting happiness.' Macbeth, when filled with a remorseful sense of the vastness of his guilt, after the murder of his king, uses two polysyllabic Latin words whose place could not be supplied by any Saxon words :

“ Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No, this my hand will rather
The *multitudinous* seas *incarnadine*,
Making the green—one red.”

Of the charm which the language of our English Bible possesses, how much is due to the large Saxon element of its vocabulary ! And why is the Saxon element so large ? One reason is, that the translation was based, as I have already said, on former translations, proximately on Tyndale's, and remotely on Wycliffe's made in the 14th century, and previous to the introduction into the language of many Latin words ; but a weightier reason is, that the subjects treated relate more to the moral and spiritual faculties and less to the speculative and discursive. The mind in its gentler, quieter, and more spiritual moods, clothes itself in the homely Saxon garb of childhood and of every-day life ;—it is only when contending and struggling in the arena of the discursive, the philosophical, and the metaphysical, that it dons the heavy armor of the Latin. It is a thing much to be desired that, for the Lexiphani-

cism, as it might be called, of many sermons of the present day, a pure, homely, strong, Saxon-English were substituted, such as would be understood by common English minds and touch English hearts. The taste which the Bible forms, is not a taste for learned words, ending in '-osity' and '-ation', but a taste for the simplest expression; and the reason that so many clergymen in our fashionable churches seem devoid of such a taste, is, perhaps, that, like Chaucer's Doctor of Physic, their study is but little on the Bible,* and too much on polemic theology, that deals in (and deals out, too,) words derived from the Latin and Greek. Here is a passage from a sermon delivered at Oxford, not very long ago: 'A system thus hypothetically elaborated is, after all, but an inexplicable concatenation of hyperbolical incongruity.'

A most interesting and valuable exercise is afforded the student of English literature, in tracing the influence which an author's subject and purpose have had upon his vocabulary; that is, if he wrote unaffectedly, and was guided by unperverted instinct in his choice of words. The same author, treating a wide range of subjects, we shall find, at one time, using chiefly Saxon words, at another time the corresponding Latin words, or rather, Latin words expressive of intellectual conceptions outside of the domain of the Saxon vocabulary.

No living poet has woven his song to such an extent

* 'His studie was but litel on the Bible.' Chaucer's Prologue, v. 440.

out of the Saxon vocabulary as Alfred Tennyson has done. His 'In Memoriam,' though it 'traverses the widest circuit of thought and feeling in search of nutriment to its mood,' exhibits, perhaps, a greater percentage of Saxon words than any other poem of the same extent in the literature of the 19th century; and this is largely owing to the genuine, unaffected feeling in which the subtlest conceptions are steeped. The Child Dirge, beginning, 'On that last night before we went From out the doors where I was bred,' may be cited as an example of perfect poetic diction, simple, and almost as direct and free from inversion and involution, as the most unadorned and straightforward prose. This dirge contains 381 words, of which 342 are Saxon, and but 39 of Latin, Greek, or other origin; 322 are monosyllables; the 11th stanza is purely monosyllabic, with the exception of the Latin word 'silence.' I might say much, if time permitted, on the important part played, in impassioned expression, by the monosyllabic element of our language.

Walt Whitman makes some remarks on simplicity of expression of which this dirge is a signal illustration: "The art of art," he says, "the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. . . . To carry on the heave of impulse and pierce intellectual depths and give all subjects their articulations are powers neither common nor very uncommon. But to speak in literature with the perfect rectitude and insouciance of the movements of animals and the unim-

peachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside is the flawless triumph of art."

From a writer like Dr. Johnson, the student would draw very false conclusions if he were to study his writings with reference to the different offices usually performed by the two main elements of the English language, the Saxon and the Latin. If Boswell has reported his talk with any degree of verbal accuracy, Johnson must have used much purer English in conversation than he did when he wrote. Macaulay says that when he wrote for publication, he did his sentences out of English into Johnsonese.

After having taken the preparatory steps thus far traced, the student will be prepared to give his attention to the manifold *shapings* of language which genius, in the contriving spirit of its eloquence, employs for the more effective conveyance of its multiform and multiplex thoughts, feelings, and moods ; in other words, he will be prepared to study, under a capable guide, the philosophy of *Expression*,—to trace the secrets of effect in the style and diction of his author,—effect as depending on the choice and collocation of words, on the management of the perspective of his thought ; on the arrangement in periods of principal and subordinate clauses ; on the use of figures of speech ; on rhythm, either in prose or verse, on alliteration, metre, rhyme, and stanza ; on melody and harmony, etc., etc.

Herbert Spencer has written a most valuable and

highly suggestive paper on 'The Philosophy of Style,'* in which he endeavors to show, and does show, very clearly, that the grand principle underlying the dogmas contained in works on rhetoric and the art of composition, is *the economy of the mind and the sensibilities in the conveying of thought and sentiment*. "Regarding language," he writes, "as an apparatus of symbols for the conveyance of thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine, is deducted from the result. A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols presented to him requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part; and only that part which remains can be used for the realization of the thought conveyed. Hence the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea; and the less vividly will that idea be conceived."

The observance, be it conscious or unconscious, of this principle of economy of the mind and the sensibilities, may be shown in the most highly impassioned attributes of expression.

The philosophy of expression should be taught through the critical reading of great authors, and not

* First published in *The Westminster Review* for October, 1852.

in the abstract mode in which it is presented in text-books on the subject. Kames, and Blair, and Campbell, and Whately, and other English rhetoricians, are all very well in their way, and worthy of careful study; but it is only by a close, and sympathetic, and ever-vigilant reading of the great masters of language-shaping, that the best results can be reached.

The student will finally be prepared to study the organic structure of a literary art-product;—to note, so far as it can be noted, how the great poet-artist has moulded his material and marshalled its manifold elements in the service of a dominant idea; by the ever-present agency of which, as in a drama like the *King Lear*, for example, ‘all the scattered lights and broad masses of shadow are blended into one pervading tint, upon which the mind and the feelings repose, through the influence of the all-controlling power that subjects the force of contrast to the higher force of *UNITY*.’*

Before closing, I would call attention to some of the valuable aids to the study of the historical development of the English language, and that in connection with the critical reading of the English classics, that have been prepared of late years. The scholarly editions and new works issued from the Clarendon Press, rank the highest perhaps. Among these, the series of English classics, prepared under the superintendence of the Rev. J. S. Brewer, of Queen’s College, Oxford, and

* Prof. Blackie’s Lectures on ‘The Philosophy of the Beautiful.’ This quotation I make from memory, not having the work by me, and it may not be verbally correct.

Professor of English Literature at King's College, London, embraces, in a convenient form, the general extent of English Literature, as represented in its masterpieces at successive epochs, excluding, however, (with one exception, namely, Chaucer,) all writers before the Reformation.

The authors included in the series, after Chaucer, are Spenser, Hooker, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Dryden, Bunyan, Pope, Johnson, Burke, and Cowper, representing the successive periods of the Literature from the Reformation to the end of the 18th century. Chaucer is the exponent of the Middle Ages in England; Spenser of the Reformation and the Tudors; Hooker of the latter years of Elizabeth; Shakespeare and Bacon of the transition from Tudor to Stuart; Milton of Charles I. and the Commonwealth; Dryden and Bunyan of the Restoration; Pope, of Anne and the House of Hanover; Johnson, Burke, and Cowper, of the reign of George III. to the close of the last century. The productions selected from the works of these authors are given in their integrity, an all-important requisite of text-books for literary study. The several editors rank among the first scholars in England, and the texts and editorial aids present the ripest results of philological and literary study.

In addition to this series of English classics, the following text-books are worthy of special mention: Morris's 'Specimens of Early English,' 1250-1400; Skeat's 'Specimens,' 1394-1579; and Hale's 'Longer English

Poems,' embracing the best representative poems of the literature, coming under the designation 'Longer,' from Spenser's *Prothalamion* to Shelley's *Adonais*. These works are furnished with the most scholarly editorial aids. On the study of the language, should be especially named Morris's 'Historical Outlines of English Accidence,' Earle's 'Philology of the English Tongue,' and Abbott's 'Shakespearian Grammar,' the latter being a most valuable exposition of the English of the Elizabethan period.

Germany has made some of the very best contributions, especially to the study of the earlier periods of the language and literature. Grein has done the best work with the Anglo-Saxon in his '*Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie*.' An invaluable text-book of Early English Literature is Mätzner's '*Altenglische Sprachproben*,' Prose and Verse, coming down to the end of the 14th century. Finally, I would mention the same author's '*Englische Grammatik*,' the most exhaustive exposition of the language, in its historical development, that has yet been made. An English translation has been recently published, not altogether commendable, by the way, but respectable. These are but a tithe of the aids to the study of the English Language and Literature which the student of the present day may avail himself of.

I would warn young students against the reading of criticisms on an author in advance of, and, what is worse, in lieu of, reading his works. A student at Cornell Uni-

versity asked me, recently, what he should read on Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. I asked him whether he had read *Timon of Athens*. His reply was that he had not read *Timon of Athens*. I told him to go and read *Timon of Athens*. And he repented and went.

16 To read *any one good* production of an author, and to get from it some direct and independent impressions, is far better than to read all that has been written on and around and about it. This is especially true of the works of such authors as Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. To read carefully, with the requisite glossarial aids merely, one or two of the *Canterbury Tales* with the Prologue, the First Book of the *Fairie Queene*, a complete poem in itself, and a few select plays of Shakespeare, such as are contained, for example, in the *Clarendon Series*, is of more worth than to read all the learned and acute criticisms, voluminous as they are, pertaining to these works. These criticisms, the result often of profound study and deep æsthetic appreciation, must not, by any means, be disparaged: but they are not for the tyro in literary study. It is well enough to know what other students have thought and felt about great works, but not in advance of having our own thoughts and feelings about them. In the early period of his Shakespearian study, the student should steer clear of the so-called philosophical criticism on the Great Poet, and should keep his mind virgin of the 'Idee' or the 'Moral' of a play to which German students, like Ulrici, have especially applied their critical

nostrils. There will be time enough for that sort of thing after he has devoted himself, with reverence and faith, to the reading of the plays themselves, making use of such aids only as are necessary for the understanding of obsolete words or uses of words, and of obscure allusions. There is a danger, too, to be guarded against, in these days of minute Shakespearian study, of becoming too pedantically special, to be synthetically appreciative. Many of the foremost Shakespearian scholars in England and Germany, at the present day, are in this condition.

I cannot more appropriately close than with a quotation from 'The Dean's English, a criticism on the Dean of Canterbury's Essays on the Queen's English,' one of the cleverest little books on our language, of a popular character, that has appeared for many a day :

"I can believe," says the author, "that the English language is destined to be that in which shall arise, as in one universal temple, the utterance of the worship of all hearts. Broad and deep have the foundations been laid ; and so vast is the area which they cover, that it is coextensive with the great globe itself. For centuries past, proud intellectual giants have laboured at this mighty fabric ; and still it rises, and will rise for generations to come ; and on its massive stones will be inscribed the names of the profoundest thinkers, and on its springing arches the records of the most daring flights of genius, whose fame was made enduring by their love of the Beautiful and their adoration of the

all Good. In this temple, the Anglo-Saxon mosaic of the sacred words of truth, will be the solid and enduring pavement; the dreams of poets will fill the rich tracery of its windows with the many-coloured hues of thought; and the works of lofty philosophic minds will be the stately columns supporting its fretted roof, whence shall hang, sculptured, the rich fruits of the tree of knowledge, precious as 'apples of gold,'—*the words of the wise.*"

